

AMERICAN TACTICS AND AMERICAN GOALS IN VIETNAM
AS PERCEIVED BY SOCIAL SCIENTISTS¹

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INTRODUCTION

The dilemma the United States has faced in Vietnam has been as painful and as difficult to resolve as any in recent times, and differences of opinion within this country over the Vietnam conflict have been serious and intense. This study explored the understanding of this dilemma and the nature of differences of opinion about it in a sample that could be presumed to be both concerned and informed.

First of all, what do people see as the nature of the choice available to the U.S. in Vietnam? Sometimes the press and the Administration have implied that, apart from the Administration's policy, there are only the equally reprehensible alternatives of abandoning the South Vietnamese or waging unlimited war. The popular debate has seemed to be seriously weakened by the fact that other alternatives, despite the efforts of people like General Gavin, were not very well differentiated or understood. We were interested in finding out what people would see as meaningfully different strategies in Vietnam, and further, in just what ways these alternatives would be differentiated. To do this, we designed a survey that would allow us to scale the psychological distance between alternatives. Knowing how far apart different Vietnam strategies were in some psychological space would tell us something about how psychologically far apart people were who favored different strategies. In addition to asking for preferences among possible strategies the U.S. might adopt, we asked respondents what they thought would happen in Vietnam -- what a likely outcome would be -- if the U.S. adopted each of the strategies; and we also asked them what the impact of adopting these strategies would be on American goals in political spheres other than Vietnam.

Secondly, what is the nature of the difference between people who advocate different strategies in Vietnam? If there is a dimension (such as "hawk-dove") along which strategy choices can be placed, do people who disagree still see this dimension in the same way, or do they actually use different dimensions in ordering their choices? Do they share a frame of reference in making their choices, or do they employ different ones? If their understanding of the alternatives is similar, what about their perceptions of what is at stake? Has the Vietnam war exposed a genuine value conflict among Americans, such that those who favor varying strategies actually want to implement different goals? Or is there still some common conception of what American goals are, of what a desirable outcome would be, such that the conflict is of the more benign sort in which people disagree only about the best means to reach essentially shared ends?

In recent years social psychologists have demonstrated that the tendency to achieve and maintain "cognitive consistency" is an important mechanism for organizing beliefs and attitudes, and a significant factor in predicting attitude changes (Festinger, 1957; Rosenberg, et al., 1960; Rokeach, 1968). We are exploring the various ways in which people with different positions achieve consistency between their important values and their beliefs and attitudes about the war in Vietnam. In future work we hope to use this case study to shed light on some of the unresolved issues in the study of cognitive structures. Here, however, we shall focus mainly on the nature of differences in opinion regarding the war and on some of their implications.

THE SAMPLE

The present survey had the official purpose of conveying the views of the membership of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) on the Vietnam war to its Executive Committee. The questionnaire itself was accompanied by a covering letter from members of a special SPSSI committee appointed to coordinate the project. In return for doing the polling, we gained access to a well-educated, concerned sample.

The questionnaire was mailed in late November, 1967, and most returns were received in early December. The date of the survey should be kept in mind in examining the results, since Johnson's resignation and the opening of the Paris talks have changed the situation considerably. In particular, the definition of "present policy" in this survey ("increasing military pressure while offering to negotiate") may no longer be applicable.

Of 2326 questionnaires sent out, a total of 835 (about 35%) were returned. More than 90% of our respondents favored strategies that were milder than the Administration's policy - i.e., there was a strong skewness of the returns toward non-militant positions. The strategy options considered in the survey, and the percentage of the sample that favored each of them above all others, are presented in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

In the entire sample, there were only four people favoring further escalation beyond present policy (three of these advocated "immediate all-out escalation, using everything needed to win, including nuclear bombs"). Thus, for purposes of analysis, we have no extreme militants in our sample. We

do, however, have a substantial number of people (61) who favored the present policy of increasing military pressure while offering to negotiate. Furthermore, there was considerable diversity of opinion about which of the various strategies involving de-escalation would be best.

Clearly, SPSSI as a group was not representative of the American people in December, 1967, for the Gallup polls reported a majority of the people at this time favoring a policy at least as militant as the Administration's (Robinson and Jacobson, 1968). It might be questioned whether our returns are even representative of SPSSI opinion, since the rate of return (35%) obviously involved considerable self-selection. The questionnaire was long (ten pages) and complex, probably requiring at least a half-hour for a reasonably careful respondent. It happens, fortunately, that we were in a position to assess the representativeness of the returns, since a postcard follow-up was carried out in March, 1968. Over 70% of the members returned the postcard, on which they indicated not only their strategy choice, but also whether or not they had returned the earlier, detailed questionnaire. The overall distributions of opinion among initial respondents and non-respondents were very similar.

SCALING VIETNAM STRATEGIES ALONG A "HAWK-DOVE" DIMENSION

We wanted to know whether all of the various policy proposals which have been advanced were perceived by all respondents as falling along a single dimension. Perhaps one of our options would be seen as different in kind from all others, or the preference structures of one group of respondents might be different in kind from all others. If a single dimension were implicitly used by all respondents, regardless of their specific policy preferences, then their policy orderings should be transitive and consistent with such a dimension.

On the first page of the questionnaire respondents were asked to compare each of the seven strategies with each other using the method of triads. If there is a dimension strongly ordering the alternatives, people should be able to rank order the alternatives without intransitivities; i.e., they should be consistent, in the sense that if a person prefers A to B and B to C, he will also prefer A to C. The results are presented in Table 2, with each column representing a different group of respondents -- the group whose most preferred strategy is indicated by the number at the head of the column. As can be seen from the first row of Table 2, one group -- those who favored "present policy" -- were more likely to have intransitive preference structures. This suggests that people preferring "present policy" may be less likely than others to make clear, consistent distinctions among a set of alternatives to that policy.

Insert Table 2 about here

Strategies might have been ordered, say, by the extent to which they promised a quick end to the war. However, we anticipated that some version of the popular "hawk-dove" dimension would be the dominant one for our sample. If this were true, and if our perceptions of the degree of escalation implied by each item were accurate, then we should observe rank orderings such as 1234567 or 4321567, but never 1235674 (number 4 is out of order) or 4732156 (number 7 is out of order). For the entire sample, 75% expressed preferences that were transitive and compatible with this dominant rank ordering. (See the second row of Table 2.) In this technique, the "unfolding" of preference orders developed by Coombs (1964), this is called a qualitative J-scale.

Finally, one can go further and consider not only the ordering of preferences but also the distances between various alternatives. Using the technique of unfolding, one gains information about distances between alternatives by observing which rank orderings do not appear. For example, if the true dimension is such that alternative 1 is widely separated from 2, 3 and 4, while these three are all close together (i.e., 1---234), then we should not find people whose preferences are 3214567, though we may find 3241567. In this case, if the person's "ideal point" is between 2 and 3, he cannot prefer 1 to 4. The object of this scaling is to find numerical values compatible with the preference structures of as large a percentage of the sample as possible. The scale values that account for the largest percentage of our sample, 63% at a conservative estimate, are listed next to the alternatives in Table 3. It can be seen that the three strategies in between immediate withdrawal and present policy do fall quite close together. Since they were so close, we felt it was appropriate (taking into account random errors as the person responded to the items) to count those individuals who permuted only 2, 3, or 4 as fitting our scale.

Insert Table 3 about here

Those favoring present policy are fit less well by our scaling than any of the other groups, though now, somewhat mysteriously, we find that those preferring general de-escalation are not very well fitted either. About 37% of the latter, although they order the items from 1 to 7, do not fit our quantitative scaling (see the third row of Table 2). Examining these cases, we found that most of them differed only in seeing number three (their choice) as closer to number one (immediate withdrawal) than to number four (enclave

holding) -- i.e., unlike most people favoring general de-escalation, this subgroup would prefer immediate withdrawal to the "limited de-escalation" involved in the holding strategy.

There are no well-worked-out statistical techniques for evaluating the significance level or the goodness of a scaling effort, but the probability of fitting this large a proportion of our sample with a single dominant scale is extremely small. On the other hand, as regards our question of dimensionality, there is some indication that fives may not dimensionalize the strategies in the same way as the less militant remainder of the sample. The scale that fits the sample best is one that clearly separates immediate withdrawal from phased withdrawal, general de-escalation, or enclave holding, and in turn separates each of these from the present policy of increasing military pressure and also from any further escalation. For our sample, the different alternatives in between immediate withdrawal and present policy were not clearly distinguished.

In the rest of this paper, we shall not consider differences between people with the same first choice among strategies. Respondents with preferences 4321567 will be grouped with others who prefer 4532167, since both prefer strategy four to all others. With this simplification, we found that there were no significant differences between respondents who fit our dominant scale and others -- i.e., between the two individuals mentioned above and a third who preferred the nonscalable 4321675. The latter is treated as someone who simply "made a mistake" in his ordering of the alternatives.

We have, then, a group whose most preferred strategy is immediate withdrawal; another which prefers phased withdrawal above all others; a third group preferring general de-escalation; a fourth group that prefers the

holding strategy; and a fifth advocating increased military pressure. We shall sometimes refer to these groups by the number of the strategy its members favor, one through five, as these strategies are numbered in Table 1. The column headings in Table 2 and in all subsequent tables refer to the groups favoring strategies one through five, respectively.

In his analysis of perceptions of the Vietnam war, Ralph White (1966) distinguished four positions: escalators (who call for expanding the war); reclaimers (who want to regain all of South Vietnam); holders (who want to secure those parts of South Vietnam now held); and withdrawers (who are ready to give up Vietnam). He labelled the first two of these groups "militants" and the last two "non-militants." These positions seem to correspond reasonably well to the spacings of strategies we obtained. As mentioned earlier, we have no escalators in our sample. However, supporters of the Administration's strategy, number five, would seem to be reclaimers; and those favoring immediate withdrawal, strategy one, are clearly withdrawers. The holding strategy (number four) proved to be not very distant, in terms of psychological preference, from either general de-escalation or phased withdrawal. We shall adopt a modification of White's terminology and occasionally refer to those favoring strategy five as militants; those favoring strategies four, three or two as non-militants; and those favoring strategy one -- to indicate their extremity -- as anti-militants. In general, the dimension we have isolated is considered to represent degree of militancy.²

Interestingly enough, even though most of our respondents are non-militants, they draw clear distinctions among the various militant alternatives: present policy, general escalation, and use of "anything needed to win." In fact, the distinctions among militant alternatives are at least as clear as those among non-militant alternatives.

ACCEPTABLE VS. UNACCEPTABLE OUTCOMES

Respondents rated each of seven possible outcomes in Vietnam as either "ideal," "desirable," "acceptable if necessary," or "unacceptable." We assigned the numbers 400, 300, 200, and 100 to these categories, respectively. Thus a mean rating of 250 or better indicates that an outcome is seen as desirable by the group in question, while a mean rating of 150 or less indicates that it is rejected as unacceptable; ratings between 150 and 250 indicate that the outcome is, on the whole, acceptable if necessary. The outcomes and their evaluation by people favoring different strategies are presented in Table 4.

The groups differ significantly in their evaluation of every outcome, and these differences have a significant linear component (by a non-parametric analysis) in every case, except for the highly desirable outcomes of a reunited, neutralized Vietnam and the highly undesirable one of a partitioned South Vietnam with Communist and anti-Communist sectors. The greatest differences, which are perfectly monotonic, appear in the ratings of a reunited Communist Vietnam, a Communist South Vietnam, and an anti-Communist South Vietnam (rows three, four, and five of Table 4). Advocating a more militant strategy is accompanied by stronger rejection of Communism for Vietnam (rows three and four), and by a more favorable evaluation of an anti-Communist South Vietnam (row five). Moreover, a neutral South Vietnam with a coalition government including the Vietcong is less acceptable to fours and fives than to others.

Insert Table 4 about here

Those for immediate withdrawal differ from all the others in that they rate a Communist Vietnam and a Communist South Vietnam as more desirable outcomes than an anti-Communist South Vietnam.

Groups one and two differ from the more militant fours and fives in that the former find a Communist Vietnam more acceptable than either a partitioned South Vietnam or a military stalemate. Fours prefer a partitioned South Vietnam to a Communist one, while the fives prefer even a military stalemate without a peace settlement to a Communist Vietnam.

Fives differ from all the others in that for them the outcomes are best ordered by a dimension which has Communism at the rejected extreme; while for the other groups the inconclusive outcomes (a partitioned South Vietnam and a military stalemate) appear at the rejected extreme.

Nevertheless, all groups agree that a reunited, neutralized Vietnam is more desirable than any other outcome, though this is rated somewhat less favorably by fives. Alongside the powerful disagreement about Communism and about appropriate strategies, this agreement is perhaps encouraging. It may in part be produced by the "social desirability" of the words "reunited and neutralized," however, and be more spurious than real - each group defining these desirable terms to mean something congruent with its evaluation of Communism.

LIKELY VS. UNLIKELY OUTCOMES

We selected four of the outcomes -- an anti-Communist Vietnam; a reunited, neutralized Vietnam; a reunited, Communist Vietnam; and a partitioned South Vietnam -- and listed them at the heads of four columns. As rows, we listed each of the seven strategies in a random order. Respondents indicated for each strategy how likely each outcome would be, using a four-point scale of

"very likely," "likely," "unlikely," "very unlikely". We coded these scale points as 400, 300, 200 and 100, respectively. Thus a mean rating above 250 indicates that the outcome in question is considered relatively likely, while a rating below 250 indicates that it is considered relatively unlikely. In this analysis only those people who filled out every cell in both this matrix and a subsequent one to be considered shortly are included, giving us 96, 216, 88, 59, and 43 respondents favoring strategies one through five, respectively.

We wanted to be able to make many different kinds of comparisons -- to test both whether one group found a given outcome more probable for strategy A than strategy B, and whether one group found a strategy more likely to lead to a given outcome than another group. In order to do this in a statistically meaningful way, we decided to treat these probability estimates as a series of repeated measures and to perform an analysis of variance on the entire matrix. The overall analysis of variance indicated that there were highly significant interactions between strategy choice and the perceived probability of outcomes given various strategies. Many of the differences among strategies are perceived by all groups, a fact indicated by the very large F-ratios for the effects obtained by collapsing over all preference groups. In analyzing the results, all differences were tested against the appropriate error terms derived from this analysis of variance (Winer, 1962, pp. 319-337). The analysis of variance summary tables are omitted here in order to proceed directly to individual mean comparisons, based on the results in Table 5.

All groups agree that immediate withdrawal is very unlikely to lead to an anti-Communist South Vietnam, and very likely to lead to a reunited, Communist Vietnam. The differences between groups appear in rows four and

five of Table 5a. Respondents preferring immediate withdrawal see a holding strategy and present policy as less likely to bring about an anti-Communist South Vietnam than do other groups, while present policy advocates see this policy as much more likely to bring about an anti-Communist South Vietnam. Estimates of how likely each of the various militant strategies is to achieve this outcome increase monotonically with militancy of preference, with only those favoring strategies two and three not differing from one another. On the whole, those favoring strategies one, two, or three do not distinguish among the various militant strategies as being more or less likely to secure an anti-Communist Vietnam, though they see all of the militant strategies as slightly more likely to do so than any of the non-militant alternatives. Those who prefer strategies four or five draw distinctions between strategies four, five, six, and seven. Notice that here fours are more similar to militants than to twos or threes.

Insert Table 5 about here

The striking fact in Table 5b is that the diagonal entries of the first five rows are always the largest numbers in their rows, and in three of the five cases, also the largest numbers in their columns; that is, each group sees its favorite strategy as more likely to lead to this desirable outcome than does any other group. The differences between groups for all strategies are all large and significant. While we saw in Table 5a that anti-militants refused to concede that militant strategies had any great chance for success in achieving an anti-Communist South Vietnam, we see in Table 5b that militants deny that non-militant strategies have any chance of succeeding in bringing about the desirable goal of a reunited, neutralized Vietnam.

One may also note that all outcomes are seen as less likely given drastic escalation. This might be interpreted as indicating that respondents see such actions as essentially making the issue of the specific outcome in Vietnam irrelevant by expanding the area of conflict. It would be interesting to know whether people who favored such escalation also believed this to be the case. This is one point at which the absence of extreme militants in our sample limits our ability to make statements about their psychological values. However, the trend of our present sample, and White's discussion of "under-estimation of an enemy's will to resist" as a cause of two world wars, suggest that people favoring rapid escalation would see this as a good means to end the conflict rather than expand it.

Table 5c, representing the perceived probability of a reunited, Communist Vietnam, is in many ways a mirror image of Table 5a. With one or two exceptions, the more militant the strategy (looking down columns), the less likely this outcome is rated by all groups. Here people favoring immediate withdrawal make considerably sharper and more regular distinctions between strategies regarding their likelihood of producing a Communist Vietnam (Table 5c) than they do in comparing them with respect to the establishment of an anti-Communist Vietnam (Table 5a).

In Table 5d, all groups see that an enclave holding strategy is more likely than any other to produce a partitioned South Vietnam. The range of probability estimates in this table is somewhat smaller than in the others, suggesting that the possibility of this outcome may be less important for most groups in differentiating between courses of action.

For all strategies, respondents preferring immediate withdrawal see a reunited, Communist Vietnam as the most likely outcome; they are the only one of our five groups to do so. Curiously, those favoring strategies two, three

and four all see a partitioned South Vietnam as the most likely outcome. However, twos and threes are closer to ones in reporting a reunited, Communist Vietnam as next most likely, while those favoring four see an anti-Communist South Vietnam as next most likely. The advocates of present policy see an anti-Communist South Vietnam as the most likely outcome of all.

Another question we can ask of this data is whether some of these outcomes were more salient than others to respondents when they first gave us their strategy preferences. For instance, a respondent whose ideal strategy is number four on our scale might have the preference order 4325167. If he preferred strategies to the extent that they were seen as leading to some particular outcome, that outcome (or outcomes) would have to be most probable given 4, next most likely for 3, then for 2, 5, 1, 6, and finally for 7. For each group, as it turns out, one and only one of the outcomes orders the strategies in the same way as the group members themselves did initially. For those favoring immediate withdrawal this outcome is a reunited, Communist Vietnam; if we assume that these respondents preferred strategies to the extent that they increased the chances for this outcome, we can predict their strategy preferences exactly, while we cannot predict them using any other outcome as our reference point. For those preferring phased withdrawal or general de-escalation, a reunited neutralized Vietnam orders the strategies precisely as they did, while no other outcome does. For those favoring the enclave holding strategy, perhaps surprisingly, the outcome of a partitioned South Vietnam is the only one that could, taken by itself, account for their preference structure (though this accounting places fours closer to number five than to one). Finally, for present policy advocates, the probability of an anti-Communist Vietnam seems to have been the most salient of the four,

for it alone orders their strategy preferences. These relationships can be seen by inspecting the four columns for each strategy choice group, and comparing the resultant orderings of strategies with the ordering that each group prefers when placed appropriately along the scale presented in Table 3.

PERCEPTIONS OF U.S. CONTROL AND U.S. CHOICE IN VIETNAM

We asked people two questions designed to assess the amount of responsibility they felt the U.S. had in determining the outcome in Vietnam. If some people were advocating a strategy even with full knowledge that it would lead to undesirable outcomes, the explanation could be that these people felt it would not make much difference what the U.S. did or believed that the U.S. had relatively little choice. The results are presented in Table 6.

Insert Table 6 about here

Once again, we encounter a striking monotonic relationship between answers to these questions and strategy preference. People favoring immediate or phased withdrawal are more likely to say that the outcome in Vietnam will be mainly a result of factors beyond our control -- a position that is consistent with their tendency to deny that even further escalation would succeed in bringing about an anti-Communist South Vietnam. More militant groups see the U.S. as more powerful, or more in control, in Vietnam; and yet they also see the U.S. as having less choice in Vietnam, as being "trapped by the situation." In some sense, of course, those favoring either the present policy or immediate withdrawal are advocating policies they know to have undesirable or unpleasant aspects, and they do make use of this chance to justify their choices. But they justify their commitments very differently -- the former by seeing the U.S. as having less control, the latter by seeing the U.S. as having less choice.

IMPORTANCE OF OTHER GOALS

Vietnam is only one among many American concerns. A person may feel that the U.S. can bear certain costs in Vietnam because he sees these costs as being offset by benefits in other areas. We asked respondents to judge the importance of a dozen other political goals, categorizing each one as "extremely important," "important," "unimportant," or "completely unimportant." Again, assigning values of 400, 300, 200 and 100 to these categories, respectively, means that any item with a mean of more than 250 is seen as important, while items with means of less than 250 are considered unimportant.

These values, and their perceived degree of importance, are presented in Table 7. Once more we find that people who favor different strategies differ significantly in their values. Again, on the items on which differences are greatest, the differences are perfectly monotonic. This is true of all of the following, each clearly related to the "anti-Communism" dimension emerging repeatedly in the study, and each considered more important by the more militant respondents: limiting the spread of Communism; maintaining the unity of the Western Alliance; safeguarding our national military security; discouraging external aggression; and also, as the Administration argues, "honoring our moral commitments."

Insert Table 7 about here

Interestingly enough, there is one point at which both ends of the spectrum agree: ^{Group 1} both ones and fives rate the importance of maintaining economic prosperity in the U.S. as less important than do other groups.

Group five sees protecting the independence of developing nations as more important than aiding their social and economic progress, while the

other groups see the latter as more important. All groups agree that eliminating poverty and racial inequality in the U.S. is more important than aiding developing nations.

Despite the substantial differences of opinion, there is still considerable agreement on which goals are most important, agreement that highlights the academic background and the relatively liberal nature of our sample. All groups agree that preserving world peace and reducing the danger of nuclear war is the most important goal, and that eliminating poverty and racial inequality in the U.S. is next most important. All groups place a very high value on protecting freedom of dissent in the U.S., which is considered third most important, almost as high as eliminating poverty and inequality, and considerably more important than following of majority opinion by the U.S. government. (The value placed on freedom of dissent, which of course includes academic freedom, is characteristic of the academic community.) In addition, with the exception of fives, all groups rate aiding the social and economic progress of developing nations as fourth most important. On these top priority items differences between groups are not quite significant, while they are significant on all other items except following majority opinion. Thus in our sample, at any rate, the fundamental value dissensus pertains to medium priority rather than top priority goals.

IMPACT OF STRATEGIES ON OTHER GOALS

As we did with the outcomes in Vietnam, we selected four of the goals that we felt might be relevant to strategy preferences in Vietnam -- preserving world peace, safeguarding U.S. security, protecting the independence of developing nations, and eliminating poverty and racial inequality in the U.S. -- and listed them at the heads of four columns, with the seven strategy

options listed as rows. For each strategy respondents indicated how likely they thought each of the goals would be furthered again using the same four-category scale. These results are presented in Table 8.

This matrix differs in several ways from the previous one. First, while we hypothesized that these goals would be seen as relevant to the choices in Vietnam, we did not assume so. Respondents could tell us that the choices in Vietnam were irrelevant to one or all of these goals by telling us that these goals would be equally likely no matter what choice was made in Vietnam. Thus some of the relationships we observed between strategy preferences and perceived probability of outcomes in Vietnam (in Table 5) might be attenuated for these goals. On the other hand, given these somewhat more general (perhaps more ambiguous) goals, there is more room for respondents to distort their perceptions such that everyone sees his own strategy choice as optimal on all counts. (Or, in an alternative interpretation, these wider goals may be more important in determining peoples' strategy choices than any consideration of possible outcomes in Vietnam.) Also, in this matrix, unlike the previous one, there is no implication that the different goals are mutually exclusive.

Insert Table 8 about here

Again, in order to make multiple comparisons in a meaningful way, we performed an overall analysis of variance on the entire set of probability estimates.³ The overall effect for all groups and for all four of these goals, is an extremely strong selective perception. In almost every instance, the diagonal entries of these matrices are not only the largest numbers in their rows but also the largest numbers in their columns. Each group sees its own strategy as most likely to bring about the desired goals.

Looking first at the probability estimates for preserving world peace, all the diagonal entries are the largest in their rows and columns. Those favoring immediate withdrawal think this strategy is an excellent means of preserving world peace; those favoring present policy think immediate withdrawal would be disastrous for peace. Those favoring general de-escalation think this would be the best means of preserving world peace; next they favor phased withdrawal, enclave holding, immediate withdrawal, and then the present policy (i.e. closely following their initial scale positions). One might note, however, that while all groups consider their own preference optimal for preserving peace, the perceived chance for this value given the group's favorite strategy decreases as one moves from immediate withdrawal to present policy. This is indicated by the fact that the diagonal entries become successively smaller.

The same pattern is dominant in the next case as well, where respondents are considering the impact of strategies in Vietnam on U.S. security. For example, those favoring the holding strategy think this would be optimal for safeguarding the security of the U.S., preferring general de-escalation next, then phased withdrawal, then present policy, then immediate withdrawal.

In this table, as in the others, these estimates of the probability of obtaining desirable goals order the outcomes extremely well with respect to the scale values initially derived -- with two exceptions. The first is that those favoring present policy seem to find phased withdrawal a more desirable alternative than any other save their own choice. Those favoring five do not suffer from this inconsistency when considering the probability of effecting their desired outcome in Vietnam. One possible explanation for this is that their strategy choice was determined more by consideration of immediate

outcomes than of wider goals, with the reverse being the case for the choices of other groups. The other difference is that, as in considering outcomes within Vietnam, those favoring enclave holding seem closer to the militants than to other non-militants.

Ones do not see their strategy as having any detrimental effect on U.S. security. The other groups are progressively more likely to reject the strategy of immediate withdrawal on these grounds.

The same pattern is repeated when we come to the prospects for protecting the independence of developing nations. One is tempted to conclude that the different groups are using these words quite differently -- that immediate withdrawers, for instance, also have in mind protecting their independence from American aggression.

The last of our goals, eliminating poverty and racial inequality in the U.S., is the only domestic (rather than international) issue considered. While there is some tendency for the different groups to generalize the virtues of their favorite strategies to extend to this goal as well, the overall pattern indicates that the various Vietnam strategies are not well ordered (according to our initial scale) at all by this consideration. For none of the groups does this goal order the strategy preferences in the same way as derivable from our initial scaling. Interestingly, there is an overall difference between groups, with those favoring Administration policy seeing the general chances for eliminating poverty and inequality as less than do other groups.

PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNIST THREAT

In all of these calculations there are certainly important assumptions being made about the nature of the enemy and the enemy's motives and capacities.

White (1965) has discussed how psychologically unsophisticated assumptions about the nature of the enemy may lead to dangerous miscalculations. In our survey, we asked people to indicate which of several possible motives were the "most important" motives behind Communist revolutions in developing nations. These motives and the percentages in each group endorsing them or attributing them to Communist revolutions are presented in Table 9.

Insert Table 9 about here

People favoring immediate withdrawal have a relatively favorable picture of Communism in underdeveloped countries. Desire for social and economic progress is seen as a most important motive by 83% of this group, with majorities also rating nationalism and patriotism and opposition to undemocratic governments in their own countries as very important. Other more threatening motives -- desire for world revolution, hatred of the West, and desire for power -- are attributed to Communist movements only by small minorities. The first two of these unfavorable motives become progressively more important for groups favoring more militant strategies, although only fives see desire for world revolution as more important than nationalism or opposition to undemocratic governments. Fives are also less likely to rate desire for social and economic progress as most important.

The ordering of the strategies by these general considerations is only roughly the same as the ordering of them by our initial scaling. This suggests that general views of Communist revolutions may be less important determinants of strategy preferences for Vietnam than specific perceptions of the nature of the conflict and of the enemy in Vietnam. This hypothesis is borne out by the striking effects obtained in answer to questions about the source of aggression in Vietnam; the results are presented in Table 10.

Insert Table 10 about here

The statement "North Vietnam has clearly committed aggression in Vietnam" is endorsed by 16% of those favoring strategy one, and by 35%, 41%, 55%, and 77% of those favoring two through five. These percentages differentiate groups almost precisely as they were differentiated by our initial scaling. Endorsement of the statement "the U.S. has clearly committed aggression in Vietnam" is a mirror image of the previous question, since relatively few people in the various groups endorse both statements, or the idea of mutual aggression. The percentages of each group attributing self-defense as the main motivation of the North Vietnamese, and pro-Vietcong sentiment as predominant among "those South Vietnamese who have strong feelings about the outcome of the war," also distinguish all groups by amounts comparable to their distances on the strategy scale. Since self-defense is the psychological rationale for most wars, it is somewhat surprising that so few of those favoring Administration policy, or even the holding strategy, are willing to concede that it is the major motivation of the North Vietnamese in their own eyes.

DISCUSSION

We know that people try, when possible, to make choices that are both internally consistent and also consistent with their beliefs about the consequences of these choices for their important values. In this paper, we have seen the extent to which people are consistent in their views on Vietnam, and how they achieve this consistency.

First of all, we saw that people chose among strategies in an internally consistent manner. Having in mind some "ideal" or "optimal" degree of militancy, a respondent apparently ordered the strategies according to militancy and, when comparing two alternatives, regularly chose the one that was closer to his ideal point on this dimension. Not only can we characterize both militants and anti-militants as having made their choices in this way, but we can say that a sizable majority of our sample agreed on just how militant the different strategies were. Apart from further escalation, which almost no one in our sample favored, the present policy (as of December, 1967) involving increasing military pressure was clearly distinguished from various forms of graduated de-escalation, which were in turn separated from immediate withdrawal.

Secondly, we saw that people were consistent in choosing strategies that maximized the likelihood of a preferred outcome (with the exception of four): a Communist Vietnam for ones, a reunited, neutralized Vietnam for two and threes, and an anti-Communist South Vietnam for fives. Fours, who advocated enclave holding, seemed to have in mind a "realistic" outcome rather than a highly valued one; for them, the outcome that best ordered their choices was a partitioned South Vietnam. If these outcomes were in fact salient in people's minds as they made their strategy choices, then discussion might be aided by making the differences in this regard explicit.

Thirdly, we saw that respondents were also consistent in preferring strategies that they saw as maximizing the important general values of preserving world peace, protecting developing nations, safeguarding U.S. security, and even eliminating poverty and racial inequality in the U.S. The belief conflict in this domain is striking. Militants believe their strategy is the best means for preserving peace, safeguarding U.S. security,

and protecting developing nations; anti-militants believe the same things about their strategy, immediate withdrawal. In some sense, these contradictions are encouraging, for if one ignored all other differences between groups, these disagreements over means would be sufficient to explain the different strategy choices; it might therefore be possible to reduce disagreement between militants and anti-militants to a dispute over means to shared goals.

Finally, people are highly consistent in justifying their strategies by their conceptions of the enemy. Anti-militants see the U.S. as the aggressor, the North Vietnamese as defending their homeland, and the South Vietnamese as favoring the Vietcong; non-militants are divided; militants believe the opposite. There is little indication in our results that social scientists conceive of this conflict as involving mutual aggression or factors unknown to them, such as the opinion of the South Vietnamese.

Degree of anti-Communism seemed to be the best predictor of differences within our sample. The relationship between anti-Communism and militancy was strong and linear. If a person was not at all anti-Communist, he was not at all militant; if he was slightly anti-Communist, he was slightly militant; and so on. It should be recalled that our sample did not span the range from Robert Welch to Stokely Carmichael, but consisted entirely of relatively liberal people with academic backgrounds.⁴ If anti-Communism is less salient for academicians than for the American public, as Robinson and Hefner (1967) report, it is nevertheless quite salient indeed.

Besides preferring more militant strategies, the strong anti-Communists in our sample seemed to differ from all the others in the way they made their choices. First, in evaluating outcomes in Vietnam (ignoring for the moment the consensus choice of a "neutralized" Vietnam) the militants

saw an anti-Communist South Vietnam as most desirable, a Communist South Vietnam as least acceptable, and the other alternatives as intermediate; that is, they seemed to be using a dimension from Communist to anti-Communist. The others saw a neutral South Vietnam with a coalition government as most desirable and a military stalemate without a peace settlement as least acceptable, with the other possibilities in between; they used a different dimension, perhaps one reflecting how "stable" the solution in Vietnam would be. Secondly, militants seemed to restrict their thinking more than others to immediate outcomes in Vietnam, for general goals predicted their strategy preferences somewhat less well. One way of changing militant opinion -- and a way in which opinion may actually be changing in the U.S. -- would be to demonstrate that such wider goals are relevant, yet inconsistent with militant strategies in Vietnam.

At this point in our research we have characterized the consistency in several domains of respondents with different views on Vietnam. From the data reported here we are ready to compute overall indices of the extent to which each respondent was rational in making choices that maximized his expected gain. In addition, we have information about respondents' reference groups, their factual knowledge of the war, the subjective certainty of their views, and their interest in receiving new information. We propose to explore the interrelationships among different kinds of cognitive consistency -- e.g. to compare the extent to which a person makes rational choices and the extent to which he perceives agreement between his views and those of his reference groups.

FOOTNOTES

1. (See bottom of title page for this note.)
2. By "militancy" we mean the use of military force, not the intensity with which a preference for any particular strategy is held. Recently it has become common to speak of "militant non-violence," but as we employ the term here this would be a contradiction.
3. In both this analysis of variance and in the previous one, we made the highly conservative assumption that the number of degrees of freedom for the repeated factors was 1, rather than J-1 (Collier, et al., 1967).
4. It is not clear from previous research whether positions on the war in Vietnam correspond to differences in social status. Verba, et al. (1967) found no relationship in a national sample, while Armor, et al. (1967) found that, among college professors, those affiliated with large public schools were more likely to oppose the war than those affiliated with small private schools. We cannot shed light on this issue since we did not collect demographic information on our sample.

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Table 1

STRATEGY CHOICES AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF OPINION

Strategy	Percentage Favoring
	N=835
1. Immediate withdrawal	21.0%
2. Phased withdrawal while seeking international guarantees for safety of all parties	40.1
3. General de-escalation while seeking negotiations with Hanoi and the Vietcong	16.0
4. Limitation of military efforts to securing areas now held while offering to negotiate	11.3
5. Present policy of increasing military pressure while offering to negotiate	7.7
6. General escalation of the war in both South and North	0.1
7. Immediate all-out escalation using anything needed to win, including nuclear bombs	0.4
Other or multiple choice	3.5

Table 2

SCALABILITY OF RESPONDENTS WITH DIFFERENT STRATEGY CHOICES

Scale Type	Strategy Choice				
	1	2	3	4	5
Transitive	86.8%	90.8	89.6	91.4	68.9
Fit qualitative J-scale	79.2	80.3	74.4	84.4	49.3
Fit quantitative J-scale	79.2	73.0	36.8	72.8	36.1

Each number in this table represents the percentage of respondents in that column who meet the condition at the left of that row.

Table 3

NUMERICAL VALUES ASSIGNED TO STRATEGIES ALONG THE DOMINANT MILITANCY SCALE

Strategy	Scale Value
1. Immediate withdrawal	1.00
2. Phased withdrawal	2.10
3. General de-escalation	2.25
4. Enclave holding	2.62
5. Present policy	4.84
6. General escalation	5.61
7. All-out escalation	7.00

Table 4

DESIRABILITY OF VARIOUS OUTCOMES IN VIETNAM

Outcomes	Strategy Choice				
	1	2	3	4	5
A reunited, neutralized Vietnam	342	359	349	373	313
A neutral South Vietnam with a coalition government, including Vietcong	289	286	287	259	215
A reunited, Communist Vietnam	228	201	189	175	130
A Communist South Vietnam	207	189	184	179	125
An anti-Communist South Vietnam	169	212	220	253	284
A partitioned South Vietnam, with Communist and anti-Communist sectors	157	173	169	189	157
A military stalemate in South Vietnam without a peace settlement	125	144	138	160	157

Table 5

PROBABILITY OF VARIOUS OUTCOMES IN VIETNAM FOR DIFFERENT STRATEGIES

Table 5a: Probability of an Anti-Communist South Vietnam

	Strategy Choice				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Immediate withdrawal	134	136	131	119	144
2. Phased withdrawal	177	203	202	209	193
3. General de-escalation	176	194	217	214	179
4. Enclave holding	199	227	234	246	261
5. Present policy	198	237	231	259	326
6. General escalation	202	234	236	270	319
7. All-out escalation	196	224	228	246	286

Table 5b: Probability of a Reunited, Neutralized Vietnam

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Immediate withdrawal	242	185	183	163	135
2. Phased withdrawal	260	274	242	242	191
3. General de-escalation	246	249	261	232	167
4. Enclave holding	205	224	219	236	191
5. Present policy	175	176	183	197	226
6. General escalation	157	162	161	176	212
7. All-out escalation	145	154	157	159	195

Table 5 (cont.)

Table 5c: Probability of a Reunited, Communist Vietnam

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Immediate withdrawal	320	331	330	342	330
2. Phased withdrawal	275	265	251	259	277
3. General de-escalation	242	247	225	234	261
4. Enclave holding	224	205	208	198	198
5. Present policy	208	198	185	176	154
6. General escalation	200	198	182	185	149
7. All-out escalation	190	188	167	151	137

Table 5d: Probability of a Partitioned South Vietnam

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Immediate withdrawal	195	210	209	192	205
2. Phased withdrawal	233	257	253	256	254
3. General de-escalation	251	268	271	259	267
4. Enclave holding	275	309	305	298	291
5. Present policy	233	248	257	249	230
6. General escalation	210	221	242	225	216
7. All-out escalation	183	194	194	192	186

Table 6

PERCEPTIONS OF U.S. CONTROL AND CHOICE IN VIETNAM BY RESPONDENTS WITH DIFFERENT
STRATEGY CHOICES

Statement	Strategy Choice				
	1	2	3	4	5
"The outcome in Vietnam will be mainly a result of factors beyond our control."	24.7%	19.4	13.9	11.1	5.2
"The U.S. has no real choice in Vietnam -- we are pretty much trapped by the situation."	1.9	3.3	12.3	18.8	26.8

Each number in this table represents the percentage of respondents in the column endorsing the statement at the left of the row.

Table 7

IMPORTANCE OF OTHER GOALS*

Goals	Strategy Choice				
	1	2	3	4	5
Preserving world peace and reducing the danger of nuclear war	448	439	435	429	418
Eliminating poverty and racial inequality in the U.S.	401	399	400	398	387
Protecting freedom of dissent in the U.S.	398	394	393	384	362
Aiding the social and economic progress of developing nations	365	353	360	334	339
Protecting the independence of developing nations	326	319	319	326	351
Discouraging external aggression	274	303	304	327	340
Honoring our moral commitments	274	288	290	312	346
Maintaining economic prosperity in the U.S.	263	287	291	317	267
Safeguarding our national military security	236	275	283	308	315
Following of majority opinion by the U.S. government	234	249	298	255	248
Maintaining the unity of the Western Alliance	197	236	248	267	277
Limiting the spread of Communism	184	233	249	287	323

*Each number in the table represents the mean importance of the goal at the left to the group at the head of the column. Respondents were allowed to place a star by any item they felt was "so important it must be achieved no matter what happens to the other values." Starred items were given scores of 500, which accounts for the fact that some numbers in the table are larger than 400 (the score for "extremely important").

Table 8

IMPACT OF DIFFERENT STRATEGIES ON GENERAL GOALS

Table 8a: Probability of Preserving World Peace

	Strategy Choice				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Immediate withdrawal	363	283	241	220	151
2. Phased withdrawal	313	339	305	295	237
3. General de-escalation	309	324	334	298	195
4. Enclave holding	249	271	263	315	221
5. Present policy	163	167	190	214	295
6. General escalation	117	124	136	146	198
7. All-out escalation	104	111	113	107	123

Table 8b: Probability of Safeguarding U.S. Security

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Immediate withdrawal	321	263	227	209	163
2. Phased withdrawal	300	319	277	273	230
3. General de-escalation	300	306	297	281	198
4. Enclave holding	251	274	263	298	228
5. Present policy	192	201	217	237	305
6. General escalation	147	155	166	175	219
7. All-out escalation	119	120	127	127	161

Table 8 (cont.)

Table 8c: Probability of Protecting the Independence of Developing Nations

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Immediate withdrawal	303	248	214	195	149
2. Phased withdrawal	280	301	276	263	219
3. General de-escalation	267	280	285	266	179
4. Enclave holding	220	241	246	280	209
5. Present policy	172	193	215	229	307
6. General escalation	133	152	171	181	242
7. All-out escalation	116	127	133	139	181

Table 8d: Probability of Eliminating Poverty and Racial Inequality in the U.S.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Immediate withdrawal	312	294	255	256	193
2. Phased withdrawal	260	287	252	258	212
3. General de-escalation	262	279	268	263	191
4. Enclave holding	201	226	219	246	186
5. Present policy	150	155	158	164	193
6. General escalation	120	125	131	139	167
7. All-out escalation	109	114	116	129	140

Table 9

"MOST IMPORTANT" MOTIVES BEHIND COMMUNIST REVOLUTIONS IN DEVELOPING NATIONS

Motives	Strategy Choices				
	1	2	3	4	5
Desire for social and economic progress	83.2%	79.0	75.2	80.2	55.7
Nationalism and patriotism	60.9	50.8	52.0	56.8	49.1
Opposition to undemocratic governments in their own countries	60.9	50.5	48.8	54.3	26.2
Desire for world revolution and spread of Communism	11.8	18.1	26.4	23.5	54.1
Hatred of the West and of the U.S. in particular	11.8	14.6	10.4	14.8	29.5
Personal ambition and the desire for power for its own sake	12.4	19.3	22.4	32.1	32.8

Each number in this table represents the percentage of respondents in each column who rate the item on the left as one of the most important.

Table 10

PERCEPTIONS OF AGGRESSION IN VIETNAM

Statement	Strategy Choice				
	1	2	3	4	5
"North Vietnam has clearly committed aggression in Vietnam."	16.4%	34.6	40.5	55.0	76.7
"The U.S. has clearly committed aggression in Vietnam."	98.1	85.1	73.8	53.8	25.0
"The North Vietnamese leaders probably believe their main purpose in this war is to defend their homeland against U.S. aggression" (vs. "to spread Communism into South Vietnam").	93.5	81.5	70.6	52.8	25.9
"Among those South Vietnamese who have strong feelings about the outcome of the war, more than half favor the Vietcong."	78.3	49.1	49.5	34.4	11.8

Each number in this table represents the percentage of people favoring the strategy at the head of the column who endorsed the statement at the beginning of the row.